



POLITICAL BOOKKEEPING: KEEPING COUNT OR SETTling SCORES?

Last Sunday a reporter of the *Seven Days* TV program, mixing up "military contingent" with "peace-enforcement forces" and withdrawal of troops from Afghanistan with their invasion, competently asked the Secretary of the National Security and Defence Council of Ukraine Mr. Volodymyr Horbulin about his assessment of Oleksandr Razumkov's comments at the "round table" devoted to prospects of NATO expansion. Volodymyr Pavlovych was quick to react by blaming his deputy of provocative statements playing into the hands of the left, non-competence, and not mentioning the fact that what Mr. Razumkov said was his personal opinion, as a politician, and not that of the Security Council.

In reality Oleksandr Razumkov, who stressed that it was just his personal opinion (and his words were conveyed in the issue of *Vikna-Weekly* on Sunday), only backed with figures the words of Ukraine's President Leonid Kuchma that within the next 10 years Ukraine wouldn't be ready to join NATO, and the alliance itself will hardly be able to accept Ukraine as its new member.

It is worth notice that both officials of the Security Council who entered into indirect polemics with each other understand this fact pretty well and, most curious, produce well-reasoned arguments.

COMMENTS TO RAZUMKOV'S STATEMENT

I am unaware of any other estimate, even purely hypothetical, of the cost of Ukraine's accession to NATO. As far as I know, till now neither Ukraine's authorities, nor non-governmental research centres of the country have produced such an estimate. And it is really disappointing, as discussion on such a serious subject without economic substantiation is a mere talkie-talkie involving adverse political consequences. So we dare state that the words of Deputy Secretary of the National Security and Defence Council (NSDC) Mr. Razumkov actually were the first attempt (at least preliminary) to assess the cost of Ukraine's Government decision to join NATO for Ukrainian taxpayers.

Experts are well aware that similar issues have been publicly discussed throughout Europe for years, involving state officials, the military, diplomats, businessmen, political parties and mass media. In the West such an approach is considered normal, as people are used to count their money and to have governments responsible for their expenditures. Before taking a crucial decision (such as joining a military-political bloc), relevant calculations and substantiations are made. It is clear that they are very approximate, as other estimates cannot be produced at that stage. So, I see no grounds to call rough estimates patently "incorrect", as Mr. Horbulin called them in his interview. Actually, the budget of any country is an estimate, nevertheless it is adopted as a law, and its execution is legally accountable for. An estimate may be incorrect if it uses false basic data and premises, or misses important aspects of the problem.

Of course, Ukraine's government may bury the head in the sand, like an ostrich, and ignore economic aspects of its decisions. Consequences of such an approach are perfectly clear. In my opinion, guests of the "round table" should thank deputy secretary of the NSDC for his economic estimate, even approximate. One way or the other, it's only the beginning intended to pave the way for more accurate forecasts. In the end, leaders of the country will be able to take a deliberate and comprehensively grounded decision.

Now we pass over to the essence of the problem. Cost of the NATO expansion was estimated more than once in 1996-1997 by the Budget department of the US Congress, the British Centre of Conflict Research, the US RAND Corporation, the US DoD, NATO Military Committee and, certainly, in the countries aspiring to join NATO. Figures ranged between \$1.5 and \$125 billion over a decade. The extreme estimates are evidently unrealistic. They witness either wrongful basic premises (for instance, accounting of Slovakia's admittance NATO) or coloration of clearly understated forecasts (intended to expedite ratification of a decision on NATO expansion in parliaments of the 19 states).

In my view, experts of the US Department of Defence, quoted by A. Razumkov in his speech, were close to correct estimates. Materials published by them make it possible to verify basic premises, analyse main lines of expenditures and the essence of measures to be taken by present and future NATO members. So, Americans put the "cost" of expansion between \$27 and 35 billion over 10 years. It is expected that the US will contribute some \$1.5-2 billion, and other NATO countries - between \$13 and 17.5 billion. Poland, Hungary and the Czech Republic will have to spend additionally \$14-17.5 billion on defence over the 10 years.

American experts suggest using of those moneys for three major purposes: reform of armed forces of the new members for their joint employment within the alliance; creation of facilities to build up NATO forces in case of a threat to security of the new members; development of infrastructure and provision of interoperability for joint operations. Readers unfamiliar with military problems are offered necessary explanation.

Reform of armed forces of the new members for their joint use within NATO suggests improvement of organisation, higher combat readiness of troops (in accordance with the NATO standards), perfection of logistics and maintenance, and military training system. It means re-equipment of aircraft and air defence systems of Poland, Hungary and the Czech Republic with a new "friend-or-foe" system, better mobility and higher protection of command and control systems, teaching English to the personnel, new organisation of staff operation (introduction of new methods, replacement of symbols, topographical charts), supplement of mobilisation stocks to the required level, etc. According to the US estimate, all these will require \$10-13 billion over 10 years.

Creation of facilities to build up NATO forces in case of a threat to security of the new members will cost approximately \$8-10 billion. It is suggested to create facilities for deployment of four extra NATO divisions and six fighter wings to the east. In the first place, it will require operational bases on the territory of Poland, Hungary and the Czech Republic for joint use (with stocks of ammunition, fuel, lubricants, spare parts, and combat support facilities). Second, the system of combat support requires modernisation. Third, regular exercises are to be held on the territory of new members, to acquire experience of co-ordinated operation of NATO forces.

Finally, development of infrastructure and achievement of interoperability of troops will require reconstruction of motorways and railways, extension of pipelines for supply with fuels and lubricants, establishment of deployment bases, modernisation of seaports, ranges, depots, etc. Those works are evaluated at approximately \$9-12 billions over 10 years. By the way, Razumkov stressed that the territory of Ukraine is 24% larger than that of Poland, Hungary and the Czech Republic combined. It means that it will be harder to repel aggression against Ukraine, as it will require deployment of more troops. Besides, operational organisation of the theatre will be more expensive.

Estimates of the US DoD cited above show once again that joining NATO is a very serious step. It has little in common with the "Partnership for Peace" program, where each partner independently determines the degree of participation. NATO members assume serious mutual obligations of joint defence against aggression, and no one will guarantee that wouldn't happen. Non-professional judgement, stating that Ukraine possesses almost everything and will only have to switch over to NATO arms standards, is beneath criticism. The alliance does not need new members with collapsing armies.

Now about the correctness of Razumkov's findings. It is true that they grate on the ears. Many would be displeased to realise that for the time being the road to NATO is closed for Ukraine, at least for economic reasons. Many seem it unthinkable that we will have to increase our military budget 8 or 10 times in order to join NATO on equal footing with our neighbours. But in my opinion, deputy secretary of the NSDC coloured the truth: in reality, even 8- or 10-fold increase in military spending, at present strength of armed forces, would not help Ukraine to become a full-fledged NATO member. And I will try to prove it.

Probably no expert will oppose that with the present level of funding the Ukrainian armed forces are degrading very rapidly. The Minister of Defence and the General Staff may only slow down the rate of degradation and preserve remnants of the officers' corps, in a hope for better times. What an upsurge may be expected, when each citizen of Ukraine is able to spend only \$9 a year on defence? By the way, this amount would be a "peaceful dividend" of each Ukrainian in case of immediate dissolution of the Armed Forces (and only if officers and men are not paid their retirement allowance, otherwise even \$9 won't come).

To realise what the present military budget of Ukraine in the amount of \$450 million means, well draw an analogy. As we are talking about possible accession to NATO, let's compare to NATO. The above sum will be enough to maintain a wing of three F-16 fighter squadrons, or a brigade of land forces, but won't be enough to support a full-strength division. If we collect money for two years, we will be close to keeping one aircraft carrier. This sum will be enough to buy two flights of modern fighters. And that is all.

We may continue to put a brave face, pretending to join NATO, but economic business is really sorry. NATO military and civilians live in a different world. Are we willing to join the alliance as beggars? We have a 320 000-strong army, plus some 100 000 civilian servants. Out of 100 thousand officers and NCOs, almost 70 thousand have no lodging. Let me ask Ivan Zayets or Borys Tarasiuk: will NATO build houses for us? May be, they'll also settle servicemen wage arrears? Or remove airmen's wives blocking runways? Pray God NATO digests the first wave of expansion; we shall see how soon will the second wave follow, if any. One way or the other, few people in Ukraine will be willing to pay \$15-20 billion out of their pockets for Ukraine's accession to NATO. If so, Razumkov's assessment is still more understated.

Given the present budget, even reduction of Armed Forces to 180-200 thousand won't solve the problem radically. First, money must be found for such a reduction. Second, with the present level of funding even reduced army will get only salaries, meals and uniform. Let me refer to calculations made by the Ministry of Defence of Ukraine as far back as 1996-1997 for the Verkhovna Rada. Then the requirements of the Armed Forces were substantiated (very thoroughly, by expense items) at a level of 6.955 UAH, then equal to \$ 3.5 billion. It means that, according to expert estimates, our armed forces need 8-9 times more funds than they are allocated now, let alone all additional expenses connected with accession to NATO. The military were realising that the state hadn't that money, and requested the minimum (!) required amount - 3.993 billion UAH, or more than \$2 billion (at the 1997 exchange rate). What is interesting is that according to the estimate of the Ministry of Defence, 1.433 billion UAH offered by the budget committee allow to maintain just 212 thousand military men and 22 thousand civilians - very close to Razumkov's words.

Let me draw your attention to the fact that at that time military budget totalled some \$800 million, while today it is only \$450 million. It means that Razumkov in no way overstated his estimate. He only reiterated the data of which Minister Kuzmuck had been trying to convince the government and the Parliament for two years in a row.

COMMENTS ON HORBULIN'S TV INTERVIEW

It is worth notice that both officials of the Security Council who entered into indirect polemics with each other understand this fact pretty well and, most curious, produce well-reasoned arguments.



In his service... the NSDC Secretary named main criteria that should be met as a precondition for joining NATO. Those criteria were formulated by the alliance as... Mr. Horbulyn rightfully stated that Ukraine was far from meeting NATO's targets. In my opinion, Secretary of the NSDC might mention another important com... O: applicants must guarantee conflict-free peaceful development of all national minorities on its territory. For multinational Ukraine this issue isn't off... and Volodymyr Horbulyn knows it not by hearsay.

Horbulyn's strongly-worded interview makes one think that he disagrees with the position expressed by the NSDC deputy secretary. Nevertheless, quiet analysis of arguments and figures used by V. Horbulyn, proves the contrary. In fact, the NSDC Secretary did not refute Razumkov's economic calculations, moreover: he confirmed their correctness and even backed Razumkov's conclusions with new arguments. The reader may make sure of it by himself.

Horbulyn argues that in 1998 Poland alone spent \$3.1 billion on its armed forces. If we believe Volodymyr Horbulyn, who states that after joining NATO Poland's military budget will increase 1.56 times, we get the figure of military spending in excess of \$4.7 billion.

Now let us compare that figure with Ukraine's military budget for the current year (approximately \$450 million). Simple arithmetical calculations show that Poland will be spending 10+ times more than Ukraine on its armed forces. That was the sum mentioned by A. Razumkov. Even today Poland allocates 7 times more financial resources than Ukraine on its armed forces. Pay attention that Poland's armed forces are 80 thou. men (or 25%) smaller than those of Ukraine. Moreover, further reduction of *Wojsko Polskie* by 60 thousand men is earmarked, on the background of increased military budget (1.56 times, according to Horbulyn's estimate). The NSDC Secretary is certainly familiar with those figures, so I can hardly explain his objections to Razumkov's words, actually stating the same.

Let's proceed. Volodymyr Horbulyn chose Poland as an example for comparison, as, he says, our countries have similar area and population. Such an approach may be accepted for very rough estimates; nevertheless, one should take into account that Ukraine's territory is not a bit larger, but almost twice as large as Poland's (603 and 313 thousand square kilometres respectively). Second: when speaking about the cost of joining the military alliance, indices describing armed forces of both countries should be taken into account in the first place. In this respect, Ukraine may hardly be compared to Poland, as some figures (such as the number of aircraft or tanks) differ not by several per cent, but two times and more in favour of Ukraine. The same refers to the military budget: while Poland's budget equals \$3.1 billion, the three countries together spend \$4.53 billion, which is not 7 times but 10 times more than Ukraine. Additional expenses related with admission to NATO are not taken into account here.

So, Razumkov's estimates are more accurate, as he compares Ukraine, on the one hand, and not Poland alone but three countries together, on the other hand. It is somewhat strange that Horbulyn did not criticise concrete figures cited by his deputy, although he had a whole week (!) after Razumkov's statement to prepare for the discussion. Instead the NSDC Secretary made public other figures (less courteously selected, as we may see), which cannot serve as the basis for comparison. I dare not say that Volodymyr Horbulyn did it intentionally. Rather, his assistants did an ill. Or it was his desire to argue against Razumkov by all means.

With his further discourse (of obsolescence and wear of our arms and equipment) the NSDC Secretary actually leads us to the conclusion that Ukraine will have to bear additional expenses. And this conclusion is absolutely correct. For too long did Ukraine fail to finance development and purchase of arms and equipment. If we don't replace at least 4-5% of weapons systems annually, we should drop any talking of modern and efficient armed forces in Ukraine. It means that, apart from the lines of expenses (directly relating to NATO accession), as specified in the US DoD estimates, Ukraine will have to spend billions and billions on technical re-equipment of its armed forces. Consequently, even 10-fold increase of the military budget (provided the present strength of Ukraine's armed forces remains unchanged) won't ensure their compliance with the NATO requirements. V. Horbulyn does not mention it directly, but this conclusion follows from the arguments cited by the NSDC Secretary.

WHAT HORBULIN AND RAZUMKOV MISSED IN THEIR DISPUTE

Unfortunately, many other, no less important, aspects of Ukraine's possible accession to NATO remained beyond the scope of the discussion.

First. Apart from purely technical standards of weapons systems, there are also NATO standards of military training. Just one example: it is common knowledge that Ukraine has talented pilots. But if they fly just 5-10 hours a year, in good weather conditions, such pilots simply won't pass NATO attestation. Flying practice at a level of 100-200 hours a year, joint combined raids, low-level flights in difficult weather conditions, overseas deployment with air refuelling, bombing practice and air combat - such are NATO standards. Meanwhile, due to shortage of fuel and limited service life of warplanes Ukrainian pilots have to fly mainly L-39 subsonic trainers or even to train on the ground imitating air combat.

Information for non-specialists: ground imitation of an air combat exercise means several pilots forming a "battle order" somewhere on a taxiway, resembling an aircraft formation, and do required manoeuvring under the supervision of their commander, on concrete pavement, on foot. This kind of "sorties" is not a novelty, it was used earlier. The difference is that previously it was followed by training flights, while presently there is no fuel to fly. Other arms are also forced to reduce combat training. Given the present level of funding, "ground imitation of a tank battle" soon will be the only exercise held in the Land Forces.

Second. The Ukrainian Armed Forces actually appeared trapped. The state has no funds to maintain them, i.e. not just to feed and provide them with clothes, but to maintain their military efficiency. Neither has the state funds to reduce its armed forces. It may seem paradoxical but it is true: it is cheaper today to keep the army than to reduce it. In my opinion, jive talking of Ukraine joining NATO must drive the Minister of Defence General Kuzmuk crazy: he became hoarse trying to persuade what Armed Forces are and how much their keeping costs. Wonders never happen. God only knows how much will Kuzmuk get out of 1.7 billion Hryvnias allocated for the current year, given the present economic situation. And he still has huge arrears for 1998 and 1997, plus unpaid bills for services, utilities, R&D. It's a matter of survival, and not of joining NATO.

Third. Although both Horbulyn and Razumkov touched upon the "Russian factor" in Ukraine-NATO relations, there is no feeling of its full comprehension. Russia, if it so desires, may easily block any attempts of Ukraine to join NATO without the use of military power. At least by two of the criteria of readiness to join NATO listed by the NSDC Secretary Ukraine won't be able to make progress in case of aggravation of relations with the Russian Federation.

Another uneasy question: what do we do with arms and equipment of Soviet (Russian) origin, while the service life is rapidly expiring or has already expired? We have no other equipment. New weapons may be bought either from NATO or from Russia, but we have no funds for that. And if we believe forecasts, no economic wonder is expected in Ukraine within the next 5-7 years. At the same time it is evident that service life will be extended not in Washington or Brussels but in Moscow, Rybinsk and Nizhniy Novgorod. How can a responsible politician ignore this factor? We should live in a real world, not in a dream.

Fourth: do our politicians and leaders realise that after joining NATO Ukraine will have not only to finance its participation in operations conducted by the alliance on its own, but also to render financial assistance to partners? It refers to Moldova, Kazakhstan, Georgia and other countries, provided they won't be admitted to NATO ahead of Ukraine. Today NATO (as a bloc) plus the USA (under a separate scheme) pay actually all our bills within the framework of "Partnership for Peace" program.

Meanwhile Poland, Hungary and the Czech Republic don't enjoy that privilege. Since recently future members of the alliance have been demonstrating their ability to pay for their participation on their own and even to help others. It is interesting to note that the number of participants in NATO seminars and conferences from the three countries has fallen dramatically (as they have to spend their own money now). So, Ukraine's application for the NATO membership alone will immediately require confirmation of its seriousness and solvency. The alliance will immediately limit our access to its funds. This provision refers to specialist training abroad, so important for Ukraine. Everything should be paid for, and declarations are not an exception, either.

Another question, still more vital but left aside by many: service of Ukraine's representatives in different NATO commands and headquarters. Today our officers don't hold offices in AFCent, SACLAN of AFSouth, although such a possibility is open for partner countries. At the same time officers from countries applying for NATO membership are serving side by side with representatives of 16 NATO nations. Now they are counted by dozens, later there will be hundreds and thousands of them. For example, a Bulgarian officer is serving at a NATO HQ in Norfolk, state of Virginia. His lodging, monetary allowance, school for his children, medical insurance, travelling, etc. are covered by Bulgaria. And this is not cheap: at least \$40-50 thousand a year. Is Ukraine ready to bear such expenses? I don't think it is.

Today Minister of Foreign Affairs Borys Tarasiuk cannot afford to open a new embassy of consulate, or offer adequate salary to his subordinates in Kyiv, as he has no money for that. Where is he going to find the money for dozens and hundreds of Ukrainian military men serving at NATO headquarters? And if he is aware of those problems, how should we understand almost everyday declarations and interviews of the Minister about Ukraine's integration into Euro-Atlantic structures? If he spoke about European structures only, it would have been intelligible: they cover the EU and Central European institutions, where Ukraine might solve economic problems. But what do Euro-Atlantic structures mean? If they mean OSCE (involving the USA and Canada), Ukraine is a member of that institution and doesn't need to integrate there. If NATO is meant, it should be stated directly and clearly for Ukrainian taxpayers, and the suggested process should be denominated not by the foreign word "integration", but defined simpler and more clear: Ukraine's joining NATO. And if accession to the alliance is inexpedient or unpractical in the next 10-15 years, government official should be prohibited to speculate on the subject. In the present situation real objects should be set before the nation and achieved.

Fifth. Are we able to learn from gains and mistakes of the other, or doomed to repeat the same mistake again and again? It is clear that in a different situation Bulgaria, Romania and Hungary would stay away from the Kosovo conflict. At least, they wouldn't have sent their units to the conflict area, open airspace for NATO flights or grant airfields to NATO warplanes. Even now they are not eager to do it, but they have no way out. Application has been filed, and they need to actively participate in all actions of the alliance. While present NATO members may reserve a special position on a number of issues, applicants are deprived of space for such a manoeuvre.

It is known that NATO is expanding the area of its interests, and conflicts are not rare. Will Ukraine's population support its government, if the country gets involved in a military conflict far from its borders? I doubt it. Neither am I sure that the Ukrainian Parliament will vote to grant airspace for NATO flights, let alone sending Ukrainian troops under the auspices of NATO somewhere to Albania or the Basque province, especially in absence of the UN mandate and against Russia's will. Such issues should also be raised at "round tables" and in TV studios.

WHY ALL THAT?



WHY... ALL TH...

It remains a secret for many why V. Horbulin reacted to Razumkov's statement so sharply. May be, the NSDC Secretary had his own reasons to reprimand his deputy. The reasons are evidently beyond the dispute of the two professionals. What makes me think so is an awkward attempt of Horbulin to touch the pride of "historian" Razumkov, who is known as a specialist in the field of international relations and, evidently, understands nuances of relations with NATO not worth than "technician" Horbulin. Besides, Volodymyr Horbulin is trying to impart Razumkov's statement political tinge and thus, without turning an eyelash, make his deputy responsible for all "sins" long ago imputed to by the left factions in the Parliament.

It is known that as far back as October 1997 in Presidential Administration on the Bankova Street, after an unusually sharp report by the Ambassador to Brussels Mr. Borys Tarasiuk and timid attempts to make excuses by the Chief of the General Staff A. Zatynaiko, Volodymyr Horbulin put a "poor" both to the General Staff and the Ministry of Defence for inadequate work on the line Ukraine-NATO. At the same time development of the State program of co-operation between Ukraine and NATO began under the direction of the NSDC Secretary. That program has been recently approved by the President of Ukraine, but either Volodymyr Horbulin read it inattentively before going to Leonid Kuchma, or he was sure that the President won't find the time to read approximately 40 pages - one way or the other, it resulted in a great discomfiture.

Of course, in the NATO Headquarters the NSDC Secretary and the program received a warm welcome, but at home it was met quite differently. The ill-fated program was widely discussed long before the "round table" where Razumkov made his assessment public. The left went as far as to threaten the President with closed parliamentary hearings on the NATO program, the Charter and the Partnership, with the aim to cancel and denounce all things that may be cancelled or denounced. One can guess that it will be the NSDC Secretary V. Horbulin who will have to take the rap before the Parliament and, later on, before the President, rather than "key" ministers Mrs. Kuzmuk and Tarasiuk.

So, Razumkov's statement at the "round table" came in handy: quite an occasion to find a scapegoat.

As soon as Wednesday, February 17, President Kuchma had to interfere in the dispute that poured on tabloid pages and TV screens. His words were conveyed at a press-conference of A. Martynenko, press-secretary of the leader of the state. President's verdict was short and capacious: mass media are not the place for settling scores between two high-ranking officials, such issues should be solved in the course of the work. The same day Razumkov told a reporter of "Interfax-Ukraine", that "polemics Horbulin discredits executive power". So, the discussion is over, no winners, no losers, parties broke even. Its only use was for our citizens who learned something new about the NATO and the prospects of accession (or, rather, non-accession) of Ukraine. It's something at least.

Now is not the time for invocations and idle declarations. Let's be realists and pragmatics. Ukraine has splendid relations with NATO. The Charter of special partnership with the alliance gives us vast possibilities for mutually advantageous co-operation. If those possibilities are a bit more limited than those of Russia which has a Basic Act with NATO, never mind: it's quite enough for the time being. Let us become a little more clever and cease teasing the geese, both our own and alien.

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